

Mathewson (R. W.)

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

OF THE ORIGINAL MEMBERS OF THE

Middlesex County Medical Society,

READ AT THE

EIGHTY-SIXTH ANNUAL MEETING,

APRIL, 1877.

BY

RUFUS W. MATHEWSON, M.D., DURHAM.



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FROM THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONNECTICUT MEDICAL SOCIETY.

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HARTFORD:

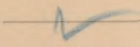
PRESS OF THE CASE, LOCKWOOD & BRAINARD COMPANY.

1877.





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That we may better understand the professional standing of the men who organized this society eighty-five years ago, let us briefly review the previous medical history of the territory, which, seven years before, had been incorporated into this county. It was here that the "Clerical Physicians" instituted the reform in teaching and practice, which resulted in the elevation of the profession throughout the colony to a proper standard.

JARED ELIOT, the father of the regular practice in this county, was a son of the minister of Guilford, and grandson of the apostle, John Eliot. He graduated at Yale College in 1705, while the institution was located at Saybrook, which at that time belonged to New London County, and spent his whole professional life in Clinton, then Killingworth, in the same county. He was assisted and succeeded by his pupil and son-in-law, Dr. Benjamin Gale, who graduated at Yale in 1733, making that place for three-quarters of a century the great resort for medical instruction, equal in importance for that period to any of the cities for the present day. Drs. Jared Potter and Elihu Tudor were educated there. It was there that the first medical treatise was published in the colony in 1750 by Dr. Gale; and in 1788 "Cases and Observations" by the same: all of which were favorably noticed in Europe.



Dr. Eliot had eleven children. The first, a daughter, died young. The second, Hannah, married Dr. Gale, and had eight children, most of whom died young. The third, Samuel, graduated at Yale, 1735, studied medicine, and died on a voyage to Africa for his health in 1741. The fourth, Aaron, studied medicine, married a daughter of Rev. Wm. Worthington of Westbrook, and settled in his native place as physician and merchant. He was a Judge, a Colonel, a Deacon, and one of his Majesty's justices. He was engaged largely in the manufacture of steel. In a petition to the Colonial Assembly for pecuniary aid to carry on the work to better advantage, it was claimed that he supplied the colony and other governments with steel. The sum of £500 was voted for three years without interest; when due, an extension of two years was granted on account of a large loss of steel by fire in Boston. He had three sons who studied medicine mostly with their uncle, Dr. Benjamin Gale. One of them married a daughter of Dr. John Ely. They all settled in the new clearings at the West. Dr. Jared Eliot's fifth child, Samuel, (Yale, 1740,) studied medicine, and died at Saybrook in 1747, unmarried. He had six other sons, neither of whom studied medicine or divinity.

Dr. Gale's second daughter married Jeremiah Atwater of New Haven. Mary, the third, was the second wife of Dr. John Redfield of Guilford. Juliana, the fourth, married Leverett, son of Dr. Leverett Hubbard of New Haven, and had a son Leverett, who was the only grandchild of Dr. Gale who survived him.

Dr. Eliot was pastor of the church in Clinton for forty years, hardly failing to preach a single Sabbath. In his preaching, plain and familiar, happy in allusions to Scriptures, and abounding in original and laconic expressions. In history, natural philosophy, botany, and mineralogy, he excelled. He died in 1763, aged 78 years.

Dr. Gale built the first story of the stone tavern at Clinton, inside of which was another stone house, two stories high, constituting a house within a house, constructed in a way to withstand the general conflagration. The upper story of the inner house, it was supposed, was used for anatomical purposes, and for meditation and study of the Scriptures on which he wrote largely. After the doctor's death, the inner house was removed, and another story added to the outer walls. He was buried in the cemetery north of his house, at right angles with other graves, his feet towards the south, so that when he arose, he would face

his former home. From his monument we read : "In memory of Dr. Benjamin Gale, who, after a life of usefulness in his profession, and a laborious study of the Prophecies, fell asleep May 6th, A. D., 1790, Aet. 75, fully expecting to rise again under the Messiah, and to reign with him on earth. I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth, and mine eyes shall behold him."

Dr. Gale, it appears, held to the old doctrine of the millenarians, who believed that the second coming of Christ will precede the millenium, and that there will be a literal resurrection of the saints, who will reign with Christ on earth a thousand years. He expected to rise in 1804.

Dr. PHINEAS FISKE was a son of Dr. John Fiske of Milford, one of the most noted physicians in the colony. He graduated at Yale College, at its third commencement, and two years in advance of Dr. Eliot, yet having spent six years as a tutor in that institution, he did not commence practice as soon. He was cotemporary with, and equal to Dr. Eliot, but the misfortune was he did not live as long. He was settled as a minister at Haddam, then in Hartford county, where he died in 1738. Samuel, son of Dr. Fiske, graduated at Yale in 1743, and died while a tutor.

Dr. MOSES BARTLETT of Madison (Yale, 1730) studied both professions with Dr. Fiske, married the daughter of his preceptor, and settled at East Middletown, now Portland, where he died in 1766. A monument was erected to his memory near the quarries by his parishioners, on which is inscribed : "He was a sound and faithful divine, a physician of soul and body."

Dr. Bartlett had three sons—Moses, (Yale, 1763,) Phineas, and Elihu (Yale, 1764). The two former studied medicine with Dr. Gale. Moses succeeded to his father's practice in Portland, surviving him for forty years; he was a deacon in the church. Phineas settled at Ashfield, Mass. Elihu died young, without a profession.

The foregoing includes those clerical physicians of this county to whom the profession is so much indebted for its advanced standing. All the sons of the clerical physicians who studied a profession, took to medicine: not one to the ministry. At the time this society was organized, there were but two medical colleges on this side of the Atlantic; and those had not fairly become established institutions. Not one of these original members had enjoyed advantages of medical college instruction, but



they were confined to private teaching. Each physician constituted a faculty to teach, and an examining and licensing board.

Several of the members of this society made professional teaching a specialty. Doctors had to be prepared for the new frontier settlements. They were like the medicines—hand-made. Steam and machinery had not come into use. The candidate “served his time,” as it was then called, which was divided between the books on the shelf, the skeleton in the closet, the pestle and pill-slab in the back room, roaming the forests and fields for roots and herbs, and following, astride of the colt he was breaking, the horse which was honored with the saddle-bags.

The practice of inoculation was at its height at the time this society was organized, and was a source of great income to many of the members. The keeping of pock-houses (as they were called) was profitable. The location of these can generally be traced by the graves of the patients in the fields adjoining. Jenner's great discovery was not made until after this society had been in existence several years.

Dr. JESSE COLE was a physician in Durham at the time this society was organized; he was not a member, as Durham belonged to New Haven county, till some years afterwards. He was born at Kensington, 1739; was a son of Mathew Cole and Ruth Hubbard; settled in Durham in 1765, and did a large and successful business till 1793, when he became involved in a suit against his son by the town, which he zealously but unsuccessfully defended, when he removed to Southington, and, in 1803, to Wolcott. He died in 1811, leaving eight children.

Dr. Cole, it is said, had two pills that he relied on, one of which he called the black dog, and the other the white dog. If the black dog failed, he would send the white dog into the stomach of the patient.

On the south side of Mount Pisgah, in Durham, he cultivated rare plants and herbs, which still bears the name of Dr. Cole's garden. He was engaged at one time in the manufacture of potash, on what is now called Potash Brook and Potash Hill.

Dr. Mathew Cole (Yale, 1783,) and Moses Gaylord were students of Dr. Cole.

Dr. Thayer located in Durham before Dr. Cole left; he, with Dr. Gaylord, has been spoken of by Dr. Bronson. (See physicians of New Haven county.)

Dr. JOHN OSBORN was the only one of the forty-seven incorporators of the Connecticut Medical Society residing in this county, and it devolved on him by the charter to organize the county society. He was the first chairman of the county meeting, and the first treasurer of the State society. He was re-elected Fellow each year as long as he remained a member, also as one of the committee of examination for the county.

The Osborn family furnishes a rare instance of superior talent being transmitted from generation to generation for nearly two centuries. The Rev. Samuel Osborn was born near Belfast, in the north of Ireland, of Scotch parents. He emigrated to Cape Cod about the first of the last century, and was pastor of the South Church of Christ at Eastham, where he gave dissatisfaction to his Antinomian parishioners by the liberality of his preaching. In a communication, dated in 1737, from members of his church, who style themselves his "aggrieved brethren," he is accused of doctrinal errors. To these charges he made an able defense, a copy of which is still kept by the family as a valued legacy. Rather than yield his convictions, he resigned his position and retired from the ministry in destitute circumstances, with a large family on his hands.

Dr. John Osborn, the first of the name in Middletown, was born in Sandwich, Mass., the town of which our chairman, Dr. Nye, is a native. He graduated at Harvard in 1735, when he was offered a tutorship, which he declined, with a view, probably, of becoming, like his father, a Presbyterian minister. When in college he was distinguished for mathematical investigations, and Latin verses, which were much admired by the faculty. It was while in college he wrote the elegy on the death of a sister, which has been copied by Dr. Field in his Middletown centennial address. After leaving college he wrote the "Whaling Song," a copy of which may be found in Barber's Connecticut Historical Collections.

The son, whose views were in accordance with his father's, was induced to give up the ministry, and turn his attention to medicine. The misfortune of the Osborns seems to have been that they were a century in advance of the times in their religious belief, and their sentiments of toleration.

It is to these differences with the sons of the pilgrims, that the medical profession is indebted for five generations of able members, and the Episcopal church for large accessions of true churchmen.



Dr. Osborn, about 1739, removed to Middletown, where he soon felt the cold shoulder of the pastor of the only church then in Middletown, the Rev. William Russell, who did not show favor to the new physician. In a letter, dated at Middletown, in 1741, the doctor says: "It is true, as you have heard, that I am a favourer of the principles of the church of England, which I believe has hindered me of some money, for the people here have more faith in their teacher than ever the Jews had in Moses, and he has had a jealousy of me, and has laid me under great obligations by kindness to me in the backward way." Whether the conduct of the pastor was a cause or a consequence of Dr. Osborn's going over to Episcopacy, is not apparent at this late day.

The doctor at that time had under consideration the purpose of going to England to receive holy orders, from which he was probably diverted by the state of his health, and by his pecuniary circumstances. He was one of the fathers of Episcopacy in Middletown, and can be said to have been present at its birth, and lent a helping hand. He lived to see Christ Church, the first Episcopal church in this county, consecrated, and was one of its first board of officers. He died of consumption, in 1753, aged 40 years.

Dr. Osborn shared the practice of Middletown with Dr. John Arnold, who, with his brother Joshua, of Middle Haddam, were students of Dr. Fiske, the former died in 1754, having had two wives and fifteen children, and with Dr. Abijah Moores, who died of small-pox in 1759, having been the father of twelve children, succeeded by Dr. John Dickinson, who left the profession for public life. Dr. Eliot Rawson, a descendant of the noted secretary of Massachusetts, removed from East Haddam to Middletown about the time Dr. Osborn's health began to fail.

JOHN OSBORN, the second of that name, was about thirteen years old at the time of his father's death. We do not learn that he possessed any extra advantages for a classical education. He early entered the office of the celebrated Norman Morrison, in Hartford, to study medicine. Dr. Morrison was educated at the University of Edinburgh, and was one of the first professional teachers in the colony who had possessed the advantages of a medical college education. John Osborn and Alexander Wolcott, son of the Governor, were considered the most distinguished of all his students. In 1758, before the former had attained his majority, he went with the army that attacked Ticonderoga, in the second French war, and in a subordinate capacity was in the medical department of the provincial troops.



The Osborns were hereditarily haters of France, and lovers of England. If Dr. Osborn ever worshiped the likeness of anything in the earth beneath, it was the British crown. It was for this reason that his valuable services were not made available during the Revolutionary War. About 1763 he commenced practice in Middletown, where he followed the profession more than sixty years. In 1764 he married Ruth, daughter of Dea. Isaac White, of Middletown Upper Houses, now Cromwell, first cousin of Hugh White, who settled Whitestown, N. Y. With her he lived for half a century, and had seven children. He was a man of extensive reading, and for some time possessed the best medical library in the State. His knowledge of *materia medica* was extensive and accurate; he excelled in chemistry; he exerted himself to remove the prejudices against inoculation for the small-pox, and to improve the treatment of that distressing disease. About twelve hundred persons were inoculated in Middletown during the winters of 1777 and '78. He was a very thorough teacher of medicine, and the character of such physicians as Moses F. Coggswell, his sons Prof. John C. and Dr. Samuel, as also Dr. Thomas Minor, attest the thoroughness of his training. "As a practitioner he was eminent. He appreciated the worth of well-bred and faithful physicians, but held quackery in the utmost abhorrence. He had great sensibility, quick apprehension, and strong passions; he spoke his mind fearlessly, when and where he pleased, and it was not safe for any to attack him in words, for none better understood the retort *keen*." He inherited none of the courtesy or poetry of his father. These ornamental qualities seemed to have passed around him, to re-appear in full force in his four sons. His success, which depended on his great ability and strict integrity, was a compliment to the people of his day. His presence was a terror to the young, and the aged now speak of their feelings at his approach with a shrug of the shoulders. He was emphatically a man of few words, and meddlesome talk and inquiries brought out from him sharp answers.

He was the opposite of Dr. Tracy in deportment. The two once met in consultation at the house of Deacon Lyman, in Middlefield, when it devolved on Dr. Tracy to announce the decision, which he began to do with his usual exuberance of smooth words. Dr. Osborn immediately left the room, remarking as he went, "a sick room is no place for compliments." He once called on his friend, the noted Josh. Stowe, at a time when Mrs. Stowe was suffering

from a severe headache. On her applying to the doctor for relief he replied, "comb it." He soon left, when Mrs. Stowe attacked her husband for thinking so much of a man who would give such a rude answer. The judge replied, "You have no right to condemn a prescription without trying it." She immediately followed the advice, and the headache disappeared in the operation. He was once called to prescribe for an enemy of his, who was very sick, whom he assured that professionally he should do all he could to save him, while personally he would not care if he was in hell already. He was summoned to Durham early one morning, when a good lady remarked, "you are not looking very well, doctor." He replied "God Almighty never intended I should, madam; get me some breakfast." He had constitutionally a predisposition to consumption, of which his father and son died about the age of forty, and he himself was subject to hæmoptysis. Yet, by his regular habits, early rising and retiring, regular exercise, temperance in eating and drinking, and his rigid observance of all the laws of health, he was enabled to live longer than their united ages. He continued through life to wear short breeches, with large knee and shoe buckles, his hair powdered, braided in a cue, and tied with a black ribbon. He was a strong churchman—his inventory contained two pews in the Episcopal church, prized at \$100, and prayer books at \$4.50 each. He built and last occupied the frame-house on Main street, opposite the Episcopal church. He died in 1825, aged nearly 85 years, and a plain brown stone in the Mortimer cemetery marks the last resting place of one who was so long a prominent citizen, and a physician who *spent his whole life in Middletown.*

The records of our society show that Drs. Osborn and Tracy obtained dismissal at a time when Dr. Hall was loaded with offices by the society, and when, as Dr. J. P. Kirtland says, "A most virulent medical warfare was waged between Drs. Osborn and Hall, (no blood was shed,) but such dreadful implements and explosive words, equal to modern bombshells, as quack, ignoramus, impostor, etc., etc." "Dr. Potter entertained a favorable opinion of Dr. Hall's attainments and qualifications, but thought some of his attacks on Dr. Osborn were not duly respectful to one of the age and high standing as a physician and citizen which the last named sustained."

Dr. John Osborn had two sons who entered the profession.

Prof. John C. Osborn, who settled in North Carolina, and, after

achieving considerable distinction, removed to New York, was appointed Professor of the Institutes of Medicine and Materia Medica in Columbia College Medical School in 1808, and of Obstetrics in the College of Physicians and Surgeons in 1813, when the schools were united. He was distinguished for character and attainments, and was especially interested in the medical botany of this country. He was the most distinguished of the name, and received many well-deserved honors.

Dr. Samuel Osborn, a younger son, settled in Brooklyn, N. Y., in 1810 removed to the city of New York, was active and honored in the medical affairs of the State and city, and proved his devotion to duty during the fearful scourge of yellow fever. He left two sons, both of whom are in practice in New York.

Dr. WM. BRENTON HALL was the son of Brenton Hall, Esq., a respectable farmer of Meriden, and grandson of Rev. Samuel Hall, of Cheshire. Both places were societies in Wallingford at that time. Dr. Hall was born in 1764, and graduated at Yale College in 1786, and probably studied medicine in New Haven—perhaps while pursuing his college course. It was claimed for him that he enjoyed special advantages from medical lectures, which he had attended somewhere. We are unable to find his name in either of the two colleges of that day. He might have attended the private lectures of Dr. Romayne, of New York, which was the only school there at that time. He commenced practice in Middletown in 1790. He married, in 1796, Mehitable, the sixth daughter of Major-General Samuel Holden Parsons, of revolutionary fame, who was one of the judges at the trial of Major Andre. Dr. Hall had four children, two daughters, who died young, the last son died recently, at Binghamton, N. Y., where he had been a very successful merchant. Dr. Hall made surgery a specialty, and had the most of that branch of practice. In August, '95, he gained notoriety by his heroic professional conduct in attending the cases of yellow fever at Knowles Landing, or Middle Haddam. Dr. Tully, in his letter to Dr. Hosack, and in his work on fevers, gave the following account of that occurrence: "The brig Polly arrived from Cape St. Nicholas Mole; on her homeward passage, one of her crew, by the name of Tipper, died, on board, of the yellow fever; the clothes which he wore while sick were thrown overboard, though a sail, on which he lay when he died, was retained.

"On the arrival of the brig at this landing Hurd and Ranney



were employed to assist in clearing her out. They were known to handle the sail on which Tupper died. At the same time Sarah Exton and Elizaeth Cook were employed in washing some of the sailors' clothes. A few days after, these persons were attacked with yellow fever. In about five days Hurd died, and within twelve hours Ranney and Sarah Exton. The alarm in the village was already so great that Sarah Exton was left alone in the night, and was found dead in the morning, with her infant child at her breast. The whole village was panic struck. After the three first deaths, Dr. Bradford, an old physician resident of the place, and Drs. Hollister and Thatcher, two young men, departed precipitately, and did not return till all traces of the disease had disappeared. About two hundred of their employers followed their example. Only five persons had firmness and humanity sufficient to remain to take care of the sick and bury the dead. The physicians who attended the latter cases were Dr. Wm. Brenton Hall, of Middletown, and Dr. John Richmond of a neighboring parish. From this single vessel there originated eleven cases of yellow fever in the town of Chatham, nine of which proved fatal. It is sad to reflect that a majority of those who so nobly risked their lives at this post of danger, and of those who so cowardly fled, should have missed the opportunity to become noble martyrs to professional duty, and should have fallen victims to alcohol. Dr. Eli Ives used to express to us his wonder that so many physicians of that period escaped becoming drunkards; that he had been urged to drink fifty times in a day, and many times at places where he could not procure a mouthful of food for himself or his hungry horse."

Dr. Hall was an active member of the medical society, was treasurer of the State Society from 1799 to the year of his death; was elected Fellow from 1797 to 1809; was five years on the examining committee. He was largely engaged in teaching medicine. Dr. Osborn used to say he turned off doctors as fast as a rake-maker could rakes.

In 1792, the town of Wallingford voted permission to Dr. Hall to open a house for inoculation for small-pox on his father's farm, in the northeast part of Meriden, near the Middletown line. Dr. Hall becoming bound to pay forty shillings or more for each case of small-pox in the town, spreading from the persons inoculated.

Several other physicians in Wallingford, encouraged by the success of Dr. Hall, subsequently obtained permission, and opened houses for inoculation in other parts of the town.

In 1801, a few months after the first vaccination on this continent, Dr. Hall associated with Dr. Ensign Hough, of Meriden, (father of Dr. Isaac) to introduce vaccination. A Mr. Paddock, of Meriden, and Mr. Bradley, of Middletown, were induced to become subjects for experiment, and, in view of the uncertainty of the results, as it was then considered, the physicians agreed to attend the men, each on the alternate days, for three weeks. They were confined at a house near Dr. Hall's pock-house, and each vaccinated three times, when inoculation gave place to vaccination.

Among the students of Dr. Hall were Dr. Isaac Smith, of Portland; Dr. Isaac J. Hough, of Meriden; Dr. Worthington, of Lenox, Mass., all of good standing, both in and out of the profession. They all seemed to entertain a high regard for the talents and medical attainments of their preceptor, as did also Dr. Jared Potter, Dr. Hall's particular friend and counsellor, whose opinion at that time was conclusive. Dr. Hall was noted for hospitality; his house was a great center for the profession in the neighboring towns. His side-board was especially free. On his last attempt to visit a patient he fell from his horse before leaving his yard; he was taken to his bed, which he was not after able to leave, and died in 1809, aged 45. Dr. Hall built and occupied the house next south of the Mutual Assurance building, on the west side of Main street.

Dr. EBENEZER TRACY was born in Norwich Town in 1762, and was cousin to the late Dr. Tracy of the same place. He studied medicine with Dr. Philip Turner, who was Surgeon-General of the Northern States during the Revolutionary war.

Dr. Tracy settled in Middletown in 1785, where he practiced more than sixty years, or as long as Dr. Osborn. He married Maria, daughter of Major-General Artemas Ward, of Shrewsbury, Mass., in 1790, by whom he had ten children; two were sons, both merchants, in New York and Peru.\*

Dr. Tracy, through his whole life, visited his patients on horse-back, as did the Tracys and Turners of his native place. He was a gentleman of great smoothness of manners, and his practice was in accordance with his character—mild and expectant.

He was elected Fellow in 1794 and '98, after which he seems to have ceased his connection with the society. He was one of the

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\* Henry D. Tracy was drowned in Peru in 1853, and Samuel F. died in New York in 1863.

examining committee as long as he remained a member. He built and occupied the house next east of the North Church. Died in 1856.

Dr. JOHN ELY, one of the first Fellows elected by this Society, was born in Lyme, 1737. He commenced the practice of medicine in Westbrook, where he married the daughter of Rev. William Worthington, of that place. He soon attained eminence in his profession, was especially successful in treating small-pox, and was interested in introducing inoculation. He entered the army at the very beginning of the Revolutionary war, raising a company of militia, and later, raising, and, to a great extent, equipping, the regiment of which he was colonel. He won distinction as a surgeon as well, and was sent to the army of the North on account of an epidemic of small-pox then raging. He was tall and erect of form, of decided character, and commanding presence.

His military career is succinctly told in the report of the Committee on Revolutionary Claims in the House of Representatives.

Jan. 23, 1833. After reciting his earlier services, the report proceeds as follows, viz :

On the 9th of December, 1877, he was captured by the enemy, and became a prisoner of war, and was paroled at Flatbush, on Long Island, where were also prisoners several hundred American officers. Among these officers a distressing sickness prevailed, and Col. Ely, from the humanity that belonged to his character, from the day of his captivity to the day of his exchange, faithfully and exclusively devoted his time and attention to them as a physician. "In discharging this duty, he encountered great hardship and much expense, as the residences of the sick officers were scattered over a considerable space of country, many of them being as much as twenty miles apart. Col. Ely, when unable from bodily infirmity, or the state of the weather, to perform his long tours on foot, hired a horse at an extravagant price, and paid the cost out of his own private means; he was also frequently compelled to purchase medicine for the sick at his own cost." "Soon after he became a prisoner, his son, Captain, afterwards Dr. Worthington Ely, in conjunction with other friends, fitted out at their own expense a vessel, and manned her, for the purpose of surprising and capturing a British force, with which to effect the exchange of Col. Ely.

"The object of the expedition succeeded, so far as regarded the



surprise and capture of the enemy, and the prisoners were delivered to the proper authorities, to be exchanged for Col. Ely. This, however, was not done, by reason of the earnest entreaties of the sick American officers, who considered their lives as greatly depending upon the continued attendance and skill of Col. Ely. He was induced to forego his right to an exchange, and consented to remain for the comfort and safety of his brother officers.

"It appeared from a certificate of Samuel Huntington, President of Congress, that still subsequent to the time when his exchange might have been effected through the valor of his son and friends, and when he became entitled to an exchange by the regular rule, that a deputation of exchanged officers, who had been his fellow-prisoners, were appointed to wait on Congress by the sick officers who remained in captivity, and to urge the continuance of Col. Ely as their physician and surgeon."

"At the head of this deputation, was Col. Matthews (since a member of Congress, and Governor of Georgia), and Col. Ramsay, of the Maryland line. Col. Ely was, in consequence of this representation, not exchanged, although entitled to an exchange. He remained and acted as physician and surgeon till the 25th of December, 1780, when he was released—a period of three years."

On his return, in 1781, with impaired health and constitution, he found his affairs in a ruinous condition, and a burden of debt accumulated. He courageously commenced work, and to some extent retrieved his misfortunes, but his health failing, and just compensation for his services being denied in the Senate, after he had every expectation of favorable action, having received recommendation from the war department, and the passage of his claim through the House, he became discouraged at the injustice, made no further efforts, and died soon after, in 1809. Although compensation had been promised by letters from Washington himself, the influence of Oliver Ellsworth, then prominent in the Senate, who was opposed to the payment of all claims in the interest of the treasury, secured the rejection of this. Years later, his sons received a grant of five thousand dollars, many original papers having been lost.

Dr. Ely won the love, respect, and admiration of all with whom he became intimately associated, and was idolized by the soldiers. He excelled as a conversationalist, and in the practice of his profession was characterised by zeal and humanity. The amiable traits of his character, his generosity, and self-sacrificing devotion

to his country and humanity—sadly enough—were the cause of shortening his life, and embittering his last days. He left two sons and three sons-in-law in the profession. Dr. Worthington Ely, the elder son, who attempted a rescue of his father, settled in New Baltimore, N. Y. Dr. John Ely, Jr., settled in Cossackie, N. Y., was a Member of Congress, and one of the incorporators of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, N. Y.

Dr. RICHARD ELY was born in North Bristol, Guilford, now North Madison, in 1765, where his father of the same name was the settled minister. He graduated at Yale in 1785, studied medicine with Dr. John Noyes of Lyme, who certified as follows:—

“To all people to whom these lines shall come—Greeting.

WHEREAS, Dr. Richard Ely, of Saybrook, hath been liberally educated, and been a student with me in the theory and practice of medicines and surgery, and, whereas, said Ely hath made great improvement in the art of physies and surgery, he is well qualified for a practitioner in said arts. I do, therefore, recommend him as a safe, judicious, and able physician, and well qualified for the practice.

LYME, June 9th, 1786.

JOHN NOYES.”

Dr. Ely commenced practice in what is now Killingworth, where he remained four years, when he removed to Wilbraham, Mass., where he had previously married Eunice Bliss in 1791. He remained there about a year, when he returned to Pautapaug, now Centerbrook, where his father was then settled. He remained there till 1805, when he removed to Chester. His father, who had become a widower, and infirm, went with him and shared his home till his death in 1814, the same year Dr. Ely received the honorary degree of M. D., from Yale College. Dr. Ely died in 1816 from a fever brought on by overwork and exposure. He had been treasurer of the State Medical Society three years, at the time of his death, he had been elected a Fellow sixteen times in twenty-four years, and was an active member of the society. He shared the confidence and respect of the profession, and the public in a large degree. He was the friend and teacher of the late Dr. Webb of Madison.

Dr. Ely had a large consultation business in the adjoining towns: his rides were very extensive, and he did a large business east of the Connecticut river. Dr. Samuel Carter said of him, “he never

knew a physician who could get at a correct diagnosis as soon as Dr. Ely." One of his cases in East Haddam was a Miss Green, only daughter of a prominent citizen. She had spotted fever twice, tetanus set in, and all articles had to be given through a vacancy from an extracted tooth; she recovered all but a scar as large as a silver dollar on her cheek. His death was considered a great loss to the public and the profession.

William Ely, (Yale, 1785,) brother of Richard, studied medicine under Dr. John Noyes, but did not follow the profession.

Dr. ELISHA ELY was born in Lyme, in 1748, and like the former Elys, was a descendant of the original Richard Ely, who came from Plymouth, England, and settled in Lyme. He was half brother to Dr. John Ely, with whom he is supposed to have studied his profession. He married Susannah Bloomer, by whom he had nine children. He practiced at Old Saybrook; was largely engaged in small-pox inoculation. His reception house was on the present Fenwick grounds. He purchased a large tract of land in Pennsylvania, on which Wellsboro, the shire-town of Tioga county, is now located. In 1797, he removed his family to Owego, N. Y., to remain till his new town was ready. He soon after lost all his property by the failure of the "Penn title," on which his own depended. The surrounding country was then a wilderness, without roads or bridges. He died in 1800 from toil, exposure, and misfortune.

William A., one of his six sons, was a leading man and a successful merchant in Owego, where he left two sons, now in the drug business.

Dr. Ely was much respected as a man and a physician. He was a leading Mason, and buried by the fraternity.

Dr. BENJAMIN HILL was the youngest, except one, of a family of twelve children. His parents were James Hill, of Guilford, who removed to Killingworth, where he married Hannah Nettleton. Benjamin and his brother Joseph, twins, were born April 15th, 1765. Dr. Hill it is supposed studied medicine with Dr. Gale; he married about 1795, Jemima Stannard, of Westbrook, by whom he had six children. In early life he purchased a considerable tract of wild land in the State of New York, where LeRoy is now located, and as each of his five sons grew up to manhood, they went out to occupy and improve the land.

After practicing medicine in North Killingworth with accept-



ance and great success for about forty years, he met with financial embarrassments in his native town, from becoming security for men who were either unfortunate or dishonest; and about 1832, he having lost his hard earnings among the rocks and hills of Killingworth, removed to his purchase in LeRoy, where he died in 1849, at the age of 74. His residence in Killingworth was a mile north of the center.

DR. SAMUEL REDFIELD, son of Dr. John Redfield, of Guilford, and Amanda Russell, of North Guilford, was born in Guilford, Sept. 12, 1762; served as a fifer during the Revolutionary War, after which he studied medicine with his father, and with Dr. Benjamin Gale of Killingworth, and commenced practice as a physician in Guilford, where the eldest of his two children was born. He married, May 21, 1782, Nancy, daughter of Asher Fairfield and Thankful Hubbard, of Guilford. After practicing for about twelve years in Clinton, then Killingworth, he removed first to Fairfield, Herkimer county, N. Y., and subsequently to Perrysburgh, Cataugaus county, N. Y., where he died in 1837, aged 75 years.

DR. HEZEKIAH BRAINERD, the oldest son of Hezekiah and Mary (Fiske) Brainerd, was graduated at Yale College in 1763, and studied medicine in part, if not wholly, with Dr. Benjamin Gale, of Killingworth, now Clinton, and commenced practice in his native place, where he was the principal physician for many years, and where, particularly as an inoculator for the small pox, he was eminent, many resorting to him from Haddam and towns around for inoculation, as a protection against that disease, so dreadful when taken in the natural way. In 1737 he built a pox house (as it was called), under the direction of the town, which voted him the exclusive right to the business of inoculation and treatment, for the term of four years, paying him "ten shillings a head" for each resident inoculated, and receiving from him "eighteen pence a head," for each non-resident. The thinness of the milk which constituted the bill of fare at the house is still proverbial. Upon the formation of Middlesex County, 1785, he was one of the number selected as a judge of the Court of Common Pleas, and discharged the duties of that office until afflicted with paralysis in 1795, when he died, aged 63.

DR. SMITH CLARK was born at Maromas, Middletown, graduated at Yale in 1786, where he was a class-mate of Dr. Hall. He resided

in Haddam for more than twenty years in the family of Dr. Brainard, whom he succeeded in practice. He died in 1813.

He was the first clerk of this Society, and continued in office for ten years, and was one of the examining board for this county for about the same length of time. He was elected a Fellow for six years. Prof. John D. Higgins, formerly of Geneva College, studied with him in 1810.

Dr. Clark was a kind and faithful physician, beloved by the public, and respected by the profession. His otherwise pure record and stained by an act which resulted in the birth of an illegitimate son, to whom he honorably gave his name and his property.

His friend Dr. Richard Ely was appointed guardian, and the son was educated at Yale, 1817, and became an able lawyer in his native town of Haddam, where he died, in 1873, aged 81 years.

Dr. THOMAS MOSELEY, son of Abner Moseley, of Glastonbury, was born 1731, graduated at Yale College 1751, and settled in East Haddam. He married for his first wife Phebe, daughter of Jonathan Ogden, Governor of New Jersey, in 1759. He afterwards married the widow of Gov. Throop, who was a daughter of Gov. Matthew Griswold. He left but one child, by his first wife, Jonathan Ogden Moseley, who followed the profession of law, and was a member of Congress from this district for about twenty years. Dr. Moseley was one of the first fellows elected by this society, and re-elected every year till his death. He was the fourth president and vice-president of the State Society, and the first elected to either office from this county. He received the honorary degree of M. D. from the Connecticut Medical Society in 1795. He died in 1811, aged 80 years, leaving his medical library to his friend, Dr. Richard Ely.

Dr. JEREMIAH BRADFORD practiced in Middle Haddam from 1754 to 1814, dying at the age of 80. Dr. D. B. Hollister, of Haddam, Dr. Elisha Phelps, of Portland, who removed to New Hampshire in 1805, where he died in 1819, Dr. Christopher Holmes, born in Hadlyme, 1762, where he practiced until his death in 1812, Drs. John Richmond, of East Hampton, and Jehiel Hoadley, (Yale, 1768,) of Middlefield, who were largely engaged in teaching medicine, were among the earlier members of this society. Dr. Robert Usher was a native of Millington, in East Haddam, and a student of Doctor Huntington, of Windham, located in practice in the southeast part of Chatham, on the east side of Salmon

River, near the Lyman Viaduct. Upon the breaking out of the Revolution, he went as a volunteer to the vicinity of Boston, and in January, 1776, was appointed surgeon for Wadsworth's regiment, in the recruits then raised for Cambridge, and served some time in that capacity. Dr. Elias Norton, son of Rev. John Norton, who served his time with Dr. Thomas Moseley, of East Haddam, was appointed mate of Dr. Usher. Dr. Usher returned from the war to his old home where he died in 1820, aged 77.

Dr. Norton settled in Machias, Maine, where he practiced many years.

Dr. ELISHA MATHER was son and student of Dr. Eleazer Mather, of Lyme, (Yale, 1738,) and brother of Dr. Samuel, his father's successor in business, and of Dr. Augustus who practiced in East Haddam. He married Elizabeth Selden, of Lyme, and located at Pautapaug, now Center Brook, where he spent his whole professional life, and died in 1836, aged 81. He had seven children, four were sons, and all studied medicine.

The first, Samuel R. S., studied with his father and afterwards became a sea-captain, and was lost at Turk's Island, in the great September gale of 1815.

The second child, Elizabeth, was mother of ex-Senator Lyman Trumbull of Illinois. The third, Elisha, studied with his father, and removed to Sodus, New York, where he died recently. The fourth, Ezra S., studied with his uncle Samuel, and located at Essex, where he still lives, aged 89 years. His seventh child, Ulysses W., graduated at Yale Medical Institution, in 1823, with great promise. He succeeded to his father's practice, died in 1832, with consumption, aged 30 years.

Dr. Mather was engaged largely in teaching medicine, and his students for many years added life to the village in which he lived. It is said an unpleasantness always existed between the rich young men of the town, and the medical students; the former gave the latter the cut at every opportunity. At one time, they got the students excluded from the favorite seats in the church. The Sabbath following, the young nobility dressed in their thin summer pants, marched in a body to the preferred seats, which they did not enjoy long, before they felt an irritation in the rear; before prayer was concluded, there was a stampede for the door. Dr. Mather was called, and found cow-itch had been dusted on the seats.



Dr. Cone, of Westbrook, was a student of Dr. Mather. Prof. Joseph Mather Smith, of New York, is said to have been a cousin and student of Dr. Samuel Mather.

Dr. AMOS SKEELS, a native of Woodbury, was a soldier in the revolutionary war; and in the battle of White Plains was wounded in the right arm while pursuing the English in their retreat from Danbury; being in consequence unfitted for labor he turned his attention to the study of medicine. For a time he studied in Litchfield, but the most of the time at Bethlem with Dr. Hastings. While there he became a devoted Christian, which shaped his conduct through life. He commenced practice in Hampton, Conn., in 1783, removed to Middle Haddam, near the line of East Hampton, in 1787, and again to Somers in 1795, and afterwards to Chicopee, Mass., where he became a deacon in the church.

He died in 1743, aged 93.









